

Application No.: 10/635,413

Docket No.: JCLA11963

REMARKS

In the Preliminary Amendment, Applicant has amended claim 1 and canceled claims 2 and 9.

The amended claim 1 recites "wherein an induction hardened area is formed locally in an area in the bottom portion of the mouth portion of said outer joint member, and is formed on a surface substantially perpendicular to the axial direction in which the stem portion extends, and wherein another induction hardened area is formed in a base portion of said stem portion, and an unhardened area remains sandwiched between the induction hardened area in said base portion of said stem portion and the induction hardened area in the bottom portion of said mouth portion".

None of the cited prior art references (including US 6,390,924 newly cited in the Advisory Action) teaches these features. Especially, none of the cited prior art references teaches that an unhardened area remains sandwiched between the induction hardened area in base portion of the stem portion and the induction hardened area in the bottom portion. Without this sandwiched unhardened area, the entire area ranging from the base portion to the bottom portion of the mouth portion is hardened, improvement in fatigue strength becomes difficult, and impact resistance drops significantly. Therefore, the special sandwiched arrangement of unhardened area between hardened areas of the present invention as defined in claim 1 achieves unexpected result.

Respectfully submitted,
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